

The Great Spirit created Man and Woman in his own image. In doing so, both were created as equals. Both depending on each other in order to survive. Great respect was shown for each other; in doing so, happiness and contentment was achieved then, as it should be now.

The connecting of the Hair makes them one person; for happiness or contentment cannot be achieved without each other.

The Canyons are represented by the purples in the middle ground, where the people were created. These canyons are Sacred, and should be so treated at all times.

The Reservation is pictured to represent the land that is ours, treat it well.



The Reservation is our heritage and the heritage of our children yet unborn. Be good to our land and it will continue to be good to us.

The Sun is the symbol of life, without it nothing is possible – plants don't grow – there will be no life – nothing. The Sun also represents the dawn of the Hualapai people. Through hard work, determination and education, everything is possible and we are assured bigger and brighter days ahead.

The Tracks in the middle represent the coyote and other animals which were here before us.

The Green around the symbol are pine trees, representing our name Hualapai – PEOPLE OF THE TALL PINES –

Sherry J. Counts
Chairwoman

HUALAPAI TRIBE
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON
P.O. Box 179 • Peach Springs, Arizona 86434 • (928) 769-2216
1-888-769-2221

Philbert Watahomigie, Sr.
Vice Chairman

**A MESSAGE TO THE HUALAPAI PEOPLE
BY CHAIRWOMAN SHERRY COUNTS**

Dear Hualapai Community Members,

From time to time, issues arise in our community that feature incorrect information. In today's world of Internet blogs and other forms of social media, this type of misinformation can spread quickly and leave our community with inaccurate impressions about important issues for the Hualapai people.

One such issue has come up lately, and I would like to take this opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings that may exist.

The issue involves our tribal sovereignty, one of our most important safeguards against intrusion into our laws, our land and our lives. I, along with our Tribal Council, cherish this sovereignty, and we are constantly working to protect it in all our dealings with other nations, governments, corporations and individuals.

Recently some things have been written indicating the Hualapai Tribe had "waived" its sovereign immunity as part of a proposed water rights settlement involving Big Sandy tribal lands, and that the BIA had opposed this waiver. Only a small part of that statement is actually true. The rest is false. Please allow me to explain.

What part is true? In proposed water rights settlement legislation currently pending in both the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives, the Hualapai Tribe does agree to a limited waiver of its sovereign immunity, but only for purposes of interpreting and enforcing the Big Sandy water rights settlement.

It is very common for tribes entering into water rights settlements to agree to this kind of limited waiver of immunity so that the settlement is enforceable against all parties. The Bill Williams settlement provides many important advantages to the Tribe. Not only does it establish and protect our water rights in the Big Sandy Basin, as well as protect the flow from Cofer Hot Springs, but it also provides critical resources that will be the key to a comprehensive settlement of our Colorado River water rights. The Bill Williams settlement is very beneficial to the future of our Tribe, and to furthering the long effort to bring Colorado River water to our Reservation. That is why our Tribal Council agreed to this limited waiver.

What part is false? The Hualapai Tribe has not agreed to waive all its sovereign immunity in the water rights legislation. The limited waiver in the legislation specifically states that it does not include any waiver of immunity for money damages against the Tribe. Thus, the Tribe remains fully immune to suit by any party seeking money from the Tribe for any reason.

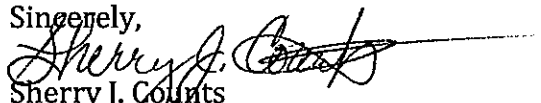
For the same reason, it is false to claim that this waiver is contrary to the Tribe's Constitution. The Constitution requires referendum approval only if the Tribe waives immunity as to a claim for money damages over \$250,000. And this waiver does not do that.

Also, contrary to the statements that have been made, the BIA did not oppose the Tribe's limited waiver. Instead, on an entirely separate issue, the BIA opposed the federal government's waiver of its sovereign immunity. Council Member Jean Pagilawa made this very clear in her testimony before a House subcommittee when she answered a question from the Subcommittee Chair about the BIA's opposition to the federal government's waiver. I thank Council Member Pagilawa for her testimony on behalf of the Tribe at this hearing and for being so well-informed on this important subject. Notwithstanding the BIA's opposition to a federal waiver, the final legislation is very likely to include a limited waiver of the federal government's own immunity.

The Hualapai Tribal Council takes our sovereign immunity very seriously, and strives to protect this right in all our dealings. It can be confusing at times when this issue is discussed among our community members, but I am grateful for this chance to set the record straight on this issue, and to clear up any misunderstandings.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,


Sherry J. Counts
Chairwoman